



BRUCE BRALEY
SERVING IOWA'S 1ST
CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT



Congressman Bruce Braley: Working to Improve Seniors' Health Care

In the 111th Congress, serving as a Member of the Subcommittee on Health under the Committee on Energy & Commerce

- As a Member of the Subcommittee on Health, Rep. Braley has been fighting for Iowa seniors throughout the health care reform debate.

Rep. Braley inserted multiple pieces of legislation into the final Health Care Reform package to improve Medicare for Iowa seniors. These provisions, which became law, include:

- Immediate and long-term steps to ensure Iowa providers are properly reimbursed for seeing Medicare patients. This will increase Medicare reimbursements for Iowa providers, and help ensure that seniors have access to Medicare providers.
- Provisions to move the system towards one that emphasizes quality care, to ensure that seniors are receiving high-quality care.
- Provisions to extend the financial health of Medicare by 9 years.

Rep. Braley also supported efforts to finally eliminate the “donut hole” gap in coverage, so that all seniors enrolled in Medicare Part D can have proper and adequate drug coverage.

- The “donut hole” has been a problem since the Medicare Part D legislation passed in 2003, and Rep. Braley has worked to eliminate this gap in coverage. The Part D program should not create ‘winners and losers’ due to coverage gaps, and the Health Care Reform package will phase out the donut hole and lower drug prices for seniors. Specifically, Health Care Reform:
 - Gives a \$250 rebate to all Part D enrollees who enter the donut hole in 2010.
 - Provides a 50 percent discount on brand-name drugs in the donut hole, beginning in 2011.
 - Phases in additional discounts for brand-name and generic drugs to close the donut hole completely by 2020.
 - A typical senior who hits the donut hole will save over \$700 in 2011, and over \$3,000 by 2020.

Rep. Braley successfully passed an amendment to H.R. 3962, the House Health Care Reform Act, to lower the cost of prescription drugs for seniors

- Rep. Braley offered and passed an amendment to allow the government to negotiate the prices that Medicare pays to pharmaceutical manufacturers for prescription drugs. Allowing this bargaining at the negotiation table would result

in lower prices for drugs under Medicare. Rep. Braley has been a longtime supporter of the *Medicare Prescription Drug Price Negotiation Act*, and his amendment is based on that bill.

Fighting to eliminate the late-enrollment period for Medicare Part D, to allow seniors the flexibility to enroll when it best suits them

- Rep. Braley co-introduced the *Universal Health Act of 2007*, which repeals the late-enrollment fee under Medicare Part D.

Fighting to increase resources for medical research and disease prevention

- Rep. Braley helped pass \$29.5 billion in FY 2009 funding for the National Institutes of Health, which is \$647 million (2%) more than the previous year. Rep. Braley fought for this increased funding.
- Rep. Braley has urged his colleagues to increase research funding for a variety of diseases, including ALS (Lou Gehrig's disease), Parkinson's, Fragile X Syndrome, Tuberous Sclerosis, Alzheimers, Diabetes, Epilepsy, and Breast Cancer.
- Rep. Braley has been particularly active in the fight against cancer, and is a cosponsor of HR 1553, the *Conquer Childhood Cancer Act*; HR 1157, the *Breast Cancer and Environmental Research Act*; and HR 2353, the *Cancer Screening, Treatment, and Survivorship Act*, among others.

Successfully overrode President Bush's veto to avoid and correct a 10.6% cut to Medicare reimbursements, which would have taken effect on July 1, 2008. That cut would have caused many Iowa doctors and clinics to stop seeing Medicare patients.

- Due to Medicare's flawed method of calculating physician reimbursements, Medicare reimbursements were due to be cut by 10.6% on July 1, 2008 if Congress did not act. Rep. Braley successfully helped pass H.R. 6331, the *Medicare Improvements for Patients and Providers Act of 2008*, which prevented this cut to Medicare. Rep. Braley even helped pass the bill **over President Bush's veto**. President Bush vetoed the bill on July 15, 2008, but Congress then overrode his veto later that same day with a vote of 383-41, and the bill became law.

Rep. Braley cosponsored the Home Oxygen Patient Protection Act, to repeal the 36-month cap rule

- This bill would restore Medicare coverage for people who own home oxygen equipment that existed prior to the enactment of the Deficit Reduction Act of 2005.
- Specifically, it repeals the 36 month limitation on fixed monthly payments from Medicare to home medical equipment providers for oxygen equipment.